



# News Release

Attorney General Robert E. Cooper, Jr.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TENNESSEE ATTORNEY GENERAL OBTAINS MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FOR SOLDIERS**

Approximately 615 soldiers once stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY will finally receive some justice as the result of a lawsuit that began in 2005 against a lender and retailer who allegedly used predatory lending and deceptive representations to lure soldiers' business. Attorney General Bob Cooper announced today that more than \$1 million will go back to soldiers or their families.

Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge Ross R. Hicks granted the State's request today against the North Carolina-based Britlee, Inc., Millenium Finance, Inc. and their owner and operator Stuart L. Jordan (Britlee). Britlee agreed to the entry of today's judgment.

The State originally filed suit against Britlee, Inc. and Rome Finance Company, Inc., in 2005, following complaints from Ft. Campbell soldiers about questionable sales and lending practices specifically targeting members of the military for sales and financing of electronics. In 2007, Tennessee added the remaining defendants after finding evidence they were actively involved in unlawful conduct as well.

"Few things are as reprehensible as conduct which exploits the fine men and women serving our country in the armed forces," said Attorney General Cooper. "My Office has worked hard to make sure soldiers, or in some cases families of deceased soldiers are treated fairly. Anyone whose business model is based on taking unfair advantage of service men and women had better think twice before doing it in Tennessee."

"Today's judgment is a win for soldiers and for Tennessee consumers," said Mary Clement, Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs. "These soldiers have done so much for all of us, and now we can do something for them."

In late 2008, the Attorney General's Office won a \$10.8 million judgment against Rome Finance, Inc. in the same case, with an \$8.8 million award specially designated as soldier restitution. Rome filed for bankruptcy reorganization in Oakland, CA. A bankruptcy trustee was later appointed by the bankruptcy court to take over Rome, after the U.S. Trustee's office expressed concern over evidence that Rome was siphoning its assets into new companies and maintained irregularities in its business operations. The Attorney General's Office is advocating vigorously in this proceeding to obtain restitution for soldiers victimized by Rome. This will be finalized when the bankruptcy is resolved.

Additionally, the injunction imposed today against Britlee provides consumer protections prohibiting certain unlawful conduct. Britlee must now stop all collections involving any affected soldier accounts, dismiss all pending collection suits and clear all affected credit bureau records for

the soldiers. Britlee is also required to cooperate with compliance monitoring by the Attorney General's Office.

Soldiers with Millenium Finance contracts should receive their refund checks from the Division of Consumer Affairs in a few months. Soldiers with contracts with Millenium Finance will also have all remaining debt forgiven. The cancelled debt for these soldiers is valued at approximately \$210,000. Soldiers are also permitted to keep their computers. Because Rome is still in bankruptcy, it is not known when restitution will be made to soldiers with Rome Finance Company contracts. The Attorney General's Office will keep working toward the quickest and best possible resolution in the bankruptcy court in California.

Consumers who believe they may have been harmed by Britlee's business practices, or who have complaints about any consumer matter should go to [www.tn.gov/consumer/](http://www.tn.gov/consumer/) or call the Division of Consumer Affairs at 615-741-4737 or toll-free in Tennessee at 1-800-342-8385.

Today's Agreed Final Judgment can be found on the Attorney General's website at: <http://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/cases/britlee/britlee.html>.